

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Effectiveness of Public Education Foundations in Indiana School Districts

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For the past several decades, school districts have faced an increase in challenges which include trying to improve student achievement with restricted or reduced educational funds. Schools are faced with attempting to fill in financial gaps with funds derived from non-traditional sources with help from partners, including public education foundations. The purpose of this study was to determine the following: (1) The goals established by Indiana public education foundations, (2) whether these public education foundations have been able to achieve their goals, and (3) how the public education foundations successfully secure funding to support their K-12 public schools.

The researcher employed a two-phase, explanatory mixed-methods research design (QUAN-Qual Model). The model uses an initial quantitative study to establish a baseline of knowledge about the subject and follows up with a qualitative study to gain a deeper insight into the quantitative results. The first phase involved analyzing the results of a questionnaire administered as part of the study. The researcher used the membership of the Indiana Association of Public Education Foundations (INAPEF) for the accessible population. Current membership includes sixty-six foundations. The final data analysis consisted of descriptive

statistics, Pearson correlations, analysis of covariance, and regression analysis to identify significant or interesting relationships between variables.

The second phase of the study engaged three education foundations in a case study review. The purpose of this qualitative study was to provide deeper insight into foundation goals and level of support to schools from the perspective of public education foundation officials.

A majority of the foundation officials that were surveyed believe that school foundations in Indiana have been effective in supporting the educational programs in their school districts. Foundation officials believe that they are able to provide positive support to schools mostly through district initiatives, classroom grants, and community involvement. The results of this research may provide public schools with the impetus to create public education foundations to support their programs or determine how to improve upon their current foundation's support.